

JANUARY 1980 NEWS-SHEET

THE PORTAKABIN NOW STANDING: While the new shed roof was certainly the most noticeable development at the Whitehead site during the latter part of last year, members visiting the site will probably have noticed that another new structure has recently appeared. This is a Portakabin which the Society purchased second-hand during December for use as a platform building. The building was transported from its original site in Belfast to Whitehead on 15 December and erected on the platform at a point near the starting area for the Summer Sunday train rides. The addition of a platform building will further improve the facilities offered to visitors to the site. It is primarily intended for use by the Society's sales department on Summer Sundays, open days, etc. Until now sales were conducted from a caravan, and more recently from a motor van, with items being displayed on tables set on the platform. This always resulted in frenzied activity to cover the stock whenever it rained - a not unknown occurrence during the summer at Whitehead - and, of course, valuable sales time was lost. The provision of the Portakabin will give visitors somewhere to examine our sales items in comfort and greatly assist in improving this important source of revenue for the Society.

CHANGE OF PLAN: It has been unfortunately necessary to postpone the proposed excursion with No.171 "Slieve Gullion" from Belfast Central to Dublin and return. This train was originally planned to operate on Saturday 22 March 1980, but due problems with the availability of coaching-stock it has been decided not to run until later in the year.

COACHING SESSIONS: A long programme of work is planned for the coaching stock at Whitehead. Attention is being given to overhauling lighting and steam-heating on a number of coaches which was the main reason for postponing the 22 March tour. Meanwhile, work continues on reroofing coaches in the new shed with 472 at present undergoing this process.

GETTING A LIFT: The Society's ex-Dublin & South-Eastern Class K2 2-6-0 No.461 has been lifted and its motion dismantled at Mullingar where work continues most weekends. Attention is being given to 461's axleboxes and one of them has been taken to Whitehead for remetalling. Repairs are also being carried out on the tender of this locomotive involving the replacing of baffle plates and the removing of brake cylinders. These jobs are some of the initial work required for the long-term project of restoring 461 to working order. Other developments at Mullingar include the provision of electric lighting and hot and cold water supply to the dormitory coach.

ON THE SLIDE: The Dublin Area of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland are organising a slide show in the spring. It will be held in the Irish Railway Record Society's premises at the former station at Drumcondra on Thursday 10 April at 20.00. All are welcome.

DON'T BE LATE: For the Belfast Meeting on Tuesday 19 February in St. Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street. The evening will feature a big programme of films by Derek Henderson and with such a lot to get through it is important to start at 19.30 sharp. The programme will include excellent colour cine of the "Dig D" Class SG3 0-6-0s on the 09.05 goods from Portadown to Dundalk in the sixties and many other scenes of the ex-GNR lines in steam days. The Portadown - Derry route will also feature.

CLOSE OF SEASON: The final Belfast Area Meeting of the 1979/80 season will take place at St. Jude's Hall on Tuesday 10 March at 19.30. A top executive of

Northern Ireland Railways will be giving a talk on the current activities of that company.

HEAVY BOOKING: The draw for the RPSI monster book raffle took place at the Belfast Area Meeting on 18 December. Approximately £100 worth of books were the prize. The winners were Mr. James McVicker of Dundonald and Mr John Guerin of Belfast.

SOIREE: About forty members and guests attended the annual Soiree on 18 January. The venue was the George at Clandeboyne for the second year running and an entertaining evening was had by all with an excellent meal. An unexpected event was the sudden appearance of a trio of medieval-type musicians who played strange tunes for a few minutes and then left as mysteriously as they had appeared.

ON THE SHELF: During February the library at Braniel, near Belfast, will be featuring a display of railway interest and the RPSI have been asked to assist in this. As well as items of general railway interest, information about the Society and photographs of its activities will be on view in the library and it is planned to give a Saturday morning talk about the history and present activities of the RPSI to junior members of the library and their parents.

WHAT IN THE WORLD: RPSI members will be particularly interested in the March edition of Railway World. Following their practice of including articles of Irish interest in the March editions of the last few years, Railway World will include a piece on the "Portrush Flyer" this year.

SPRING INTO ACTION: Now that the days are beginning to get longer why not take advantage of the extra daylight and spend some time at Whitehead? Work continues every Saturday and Sunday on locomotives, coaches and track and your help is needed if progress is to continue. So why not come along and lend a hand?

NEWS-SHEET EXTRA

LATE ARRIVALS: Since this batch of circulars has been sent to members rather later than was originally planned, the following items of news are additional to the contents of the January 1980 News-Sheet.

CHEQUE-ING IN: Members in the Republic of Ireland, who have heard of the Bank dispute which is currently taking place in Northern Ireland, may have been wondering about renewing their annual membership while cheques from banks in the Republic of Ireland are not being handled by banks in the North. Membership Secretary, Mervyn Darragh, asks members in the Republic to send their cheques to him as normal when renewing their membership.

NEW LINES OPENING: The sales department have a series of new lines available which they wish to draw to the attention of members? Why not cut a dash with Great Northern tie pins (£1.00) and cufflinks (£1.30 per pair)? And having tastefully decorated yourself, don't forget the car - GNR(I) car stickers (35p) and metal badges (£5.00). There is also an opportunity to buy R.M. Arnold's "The Golden Years of The Great Northern Railway" at £6.50 in the new hardback version with extra photographs. A limited number of the March edition of "Railway World" (with Portrush Flyer article) are also available at 50p. In all cases post and package is extra. Some of these items are limited, so don't delay send your order today to Irish Steam Scene.

ADAVOYLE VIA LIVERPOOL? Those of you who may be making a week of it after the Rocket 150 celebrations at Rainhill in May will be interested to learn that Tony Miles's famous 21mm gauge 4mm to the foot scale (that's 5'3" if you want to avoid mental arithmetic) model railway layout "Adavoyle" will be on view at the Merseyside Model Railway Exhibition. This layout is based on

GNR(I) practice and was featured in slides during the Model Night at the Belfast Area December Meeting. The exhibition runs from 27 to 31 May and is at the Centre Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool.

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